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## Viewing cable 10SANAA45, SALEH STICKS TO HIS CT GUNS, BUT OFFERS A WAY OUT

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#10SANAA45**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">10SANAA45</a>	<a href="#">2010-01-11 14:05</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">SECRET</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Sanaa</a>

Appears in these articles:

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S E C R E T SANAA 000045

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARP AMACDONALD AND OPS CENTER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/11/2020

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [YM](#)

SUBJECT: SALEH STICKS TO HIS CT GUNS, BUT OFFERS A WAY OUT  
TO AQAP RANK AND FILE

REF: A. SANAA 0014

[1](#)B. 09 SANAA 1299

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen Seche for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (S) SUMMARY. After several successful counter-terrorism operations aimed at uprooting an entrenched al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), President Saleh announced on January 9 that he was willing to negotiate with AQAP members who renounced violence, signaling a return to one of the tactics Saleh has used previously to control the wide spectrum of Islamic extremists in Yemen. With a variety of domestic actors ) from conservative clerics to the political opposition and the tribes - protesting the ROYG's recent strikes against AQAP, Saleh is feeling pressure to shore up his domestic political base by offering the possibility of a softer approach to AQAP's lower-ranking membership. He has not, however, shied away from his commitment to go after al-Qaeda's top leadership, which he understands is unlikely to either renounce terrorism or agree to negotiate with the ROYG, especially after a series of sweeping CT operations in December and January. END SUMMARY.

12. (S) During a January 9 interview with Abu Dhabi TV, President Saleh said that while he was willing to negotiate with members of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) who were willing to renounce violence, he would continue to pursue to the best of his abilities those who continued to engage in terrorism. "Dialogue is the best way ) even with al-Qaeda, if they set aside their weapons and return to reason," he said. Official news outlets, including 26 September, al-Jamhurriya, and al-Mutammar, reprinted the complete text of the interview on January 10, signaling the government's official endorsement of the president's comment. (Note: The interview echoes his January 1 editorial in official al-Thawra newspaper, in which he called for the Houthis and AQAP to renounce violence and embrace dialogue with the government as well as his December 14 call for a National Dialogue to include a variety of societal actors (Ref A). End Note.)

13. (S) xxxxx told PolOff on January 11 he was surprised at the president's openness in offering to talk to members of al-Qaeda, but that the ROYG has a history of dialogue through the rehabilitation program for "reformed" extremists. (Note: In the past, Minister of Religious Endowments Judge Hamoud Hitar ran a now-defunct rehabilitation program for religious extremists based on dialogue. End Note.) Saleh is known for negotiating with his domestic opponents, including al-Qaeda. For years, he has negotiated with, exploited, bribed and cajoled Islamic extremists in Yemen for his own political gain (Ref B). Even officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), including Head of the North America Department Adil al-Sunaini, acknowledged that negotiating with AQAP is an "old government policy." "Our good president says things to play the old game and keep everyone under his thumb," xxxxx told PolOff on January

11. (Comment: Despite a history of negotiating with al-Qaeda, Saleh's current offer of dialogue to AQAP members who renounce violence is unlikely to apply to the group's hardened leadership. Instead, the president is likely appealing to his religious base by offering an "out" to the organization's rank and file, who, after a series of punitive operations against AQAP in December and January, might be looking for just such an opportunity. End Comment.)

14. (S) Saleh's remarks come after three weeks of public criticism of the ROYG's close CT cooperation with the U.S. - and specifically a December 17 airstrike in Abyan governorate - from a variety of domestic actors, including religious clerics, tribal leaders and the political opposition. One of the most significant challenges has come from the conservative religious establishment. In a January 8 Friday sermon, conservative Salafi cleric and powerful Islah member Abdulmajid al-Zindani railed against Yemen's CT cooperation with the U.S., accusing it of wanting to "occupy" Yemen, according to local press reports. Dubai-based al-Arabiya reported on January 11 that influential Aden-based Salafi cleric Ali Mohammed Umar said his followers would fight with AQAP against any American intervention in Yemen. "The president's two pillars of support are the military and the Salafis. These comments were for the Salafis," xxxxx said. xxxxx,

told PolOff on January 11, "Do not give these remarks too much care. It is just a media statement." xxxxx pointed out that the remarks, made in Arabic on a Middle Eastern satellite TV channel, were intended for domestic - not

Western - consumption. xxxxx, told EmbOff on January 11 thatxxxxx on the president's remarks because they were "not to be taken seriously."

Comment

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15. (S) While Saleh's remarks reflect a need to appease certain domestic constituencies upset by close cooperation with the U.S. against AQAP, he has not given any indications of shying away from future operations against AQAP leadership. In the same interview, Saleh said that terrorists are a "danger not just to Yemen,s security but to international security, especially al-Qaeda." While the president likes to keep all options on the table and never writes off the possibility of negotiations with any political opponent, his current offer is likely to apply to AQAP's rank and file - not its hardened, isolated and hunted leadership. In Yemen, especially, actions speak louder than words, and Saleh's actions have not yet wavered in uprooting al-Qaeda. End comment.  
Seche